



## Japanese Persimmon

There are two native persimmon trees in the U.S., the Texas and the American, but these are not known for the tastiness of their fruit. The Japanese persimmon is the tree that persimmon lovers cherish. It is an attractive, long-lived tree about 25' tall, producing a delicious orange-red fruit in the fall. It has good resistance to insects and disease. This fruiting persimmon is originally from China, where more than 2000 cultivars exist. It later spread to Japan and Korea, and arrived in the U.S. in the mid-1800s.

The word *persimmon* is derived from an Algonquian word meaning "a dry fruit." In 1612, Captain John Smith of Virginia wrote, "If it be not ripe it will draw a man's mouth awrie, with much torment; but when it is ripe, it is as delicious as an Apricock." (in *Edible Austin* by M. M. Pack). This quote refers to the *astringent* nature of unripe persimmons. The fruits are classified as either astringent or non-astringent. Non-astringent varieties may be eaten while still firm and have a milder flavor. Astringent varieties must ripen until they are fully soft, at which time they acquire a rich, complex, and very sweet flavor. Both types will continue to ripen after picked.

To plant, choose a location in full sun. Space trees 15 – 20 feet apart. Japanese persimmons are tolerant of less than perfect soil. However, for best results, amend the soil to a depth of at least 18 inches and a width of at least 3 feet for each tree. If you have deep soil, mix into the native soil a **high quality compost**. The resulting blend can be 20% - 50% compost. If you have shallow soil, mix in a well-draining prepared soil to the native soil and create a raised bed. The larger the area around the tree you amend, the better. At the same time, mix in a quality organic fertilizer, and a good **mineral supplement**. Fertilize lightly with an **organic fertilizer** or compost every spring and fall. Maintain a 3" layer of mulch over the root zone.

Consult our *Planting & Maintenance Guide for Fruits, Nuts, & Berries* and *Tree Planting & Care* handouts for more information. All our persimmons are self-fertile and do not need a pollinator. Our trees are grafted onto Lotus persimmon rootstock.

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**Persimmon Varieties for Central Texas (astringent or non-astringent)** – Size and shape of fruit; Ripening time; Fruit color, quality, & flavor; Skin color; Seeded or seedless; Other qualities & information.

**Chocolate (non-astringent)** – Medium, round fruit; that ripen to a brown color flesh and skin. This is a hard to find variety that is juicy, sweet and complexly flavored with a hint of nutmeg.

**Fuyu (non-astringent)** – Large, round, and flattened fruit; November, and may remain on the tree for up to two months; Red-orange, high quality fruit; Red-orange skin; Seedless, unless it is pollinated; The most popular non-astringent Japanese persimmon in the world; Susceptible to freeze damage.

**Hachiya (astringent)** – Very large, oblong-conical fruit with a short point; November; Rich, sweet, delicious, dark yellow flesh; Bright orange-red skin; Seedless; Good for drying; Vigorous, upright, and productive tree; An outstanding Texas variety since at least 1894.

**Saijo (astringent)** – Medium plum shaped fruit; Earliest fruiting persimmon; Late September to early October; Deep Orange skin; Seedless very tasty, sweet flesh great for fresh eating after fruit has softened.

**Tamopan (astringent)** – Very large, flat, somewhat four-sided fruit with a distinctive indentation all around the fruit, making it look like an acorn in cross section; November; Tender, juicy, sweet, light-orange flesh; Thick orange-red skin; Usually seedless; Moderately productive; The most vigorous and upright of the varieties grown in Texas; Introduced into the U.S. from China in 1905.

**Tanenashi (astringent)** – Medium, round-conical fruit; October; Very sweet, yellow-orange flesh; Brilliant orange skin; Seedless; Fruit stores extremely well on the tree; Vigorous, rounded, productive tree.